

MONTANA UPDATE

Montana Department of Commerce

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Winter Tourism: Kickin' It Up a Notch

If you've heard it once, you've heard it a million times. It's hard to break through the advertising clutter. It's hard to be seen and heard. Dollars don't go as far. What's a state agency to do?

How about giving away a ski mountain, chock full of fresh powder, lift attendants ready and no one else on the mountain except you and five of your closest comrades or favorite family members? Travel Montana, Mercury Advertising and Showdown Ski Area are working together to do just that. This all-expenses paid, once-in-a-lifetime trip will be given away in 2007.

The "Win Your Own Mountain" giveaway underscores everything that's special about Montana skiing. It's pure, nearly untouched, uncrowded and full of soul. The trip will be promoted this fall and early winter through Travel Montana's continued partnership with The North Face, REI and two new partners for 2006-07, *Outside Magazine* and Teton Gravity Research (TGR).

The website (WinYourOwnMountain.com) is scheduled to go live in mid-September. The promotion will be featured in national magazine ads, on wintermt.com,

thenorthface.com and in The North Face's nine signature stores across the country. "Win Your Own Mountain" will headline *Outside Magazine's* "Powder Play" shows hosted in Seattle, Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, Minneapolis and Denver. TGR will also feature the giveaway in several of its shows nationwide.

Travel Montana continues to focus on key markets for the 2006-07 season. Minnesota will remain the primary key market. Radio, outdoor advertising and our second Montana Road Show (in partnership with REI) will lead the charge. Five major Montana ski areas, one tourism region, four CVBs and Travel Montana will attend the REI show.

A smaller budget is allocated towards entry into the Seattle market. Radio and outdoor advertising will be used to reach this audience.

Travel Montana is freshening things up in the snowmobile arena, too. Sled the Rockies, Montana's snowmobiling partnership with Wyoming and Idaho, got a facelift to its website (sledtherockies.com) last season. This year, the co-op is maximizing its budget to allow an additional \$30,000 to be invested in magazine and internet media buys. In an effort to generate more interest



in traveling this tri-state snowmobiling region, the snowmobile giveaway has been replaced with three separately awarded grand prize guided snowmobile adventures to each of the participating states.

Four Communities Awarded Funds for Heritage Tourism

Four Montana Preserve America communities; Fort Benton, Virginia City, Red Lodge and Missoula will receive over \$35,000 in grant money to enhance heritage tourism in their areas.

In March, the Montana Historical Society's State Historic Preservation Office received a Preserve America grant of \$150,000 to fund their initiative known as The Montana Rural Heritage Experience. These grants are available for Montana Preserve America communities that have demonstrated a commitment to recognizing, designating and protecting local cultural resources.

Fort Benton plans to improve interpretive signs on the Hands of Harvest trail that will direct visitors to over one hundred farms, bed and breakfasts, ranches, artist studios, galleries and local restaurants along five self-guided loop tours in rural north central Montana.

The community of Virginia City intends to invest in a marketing campaign using vintage looking signs, placemats and



Montana's Summer Production Roundup

With the Big Sky on the Big Screen Act in full swing, production in Montana has been gaining steam. Montana hosted two feature films this summer, the larger of the two being "A Plumm Summer" starring Henry Winkler and Billy Baldwin. The film was shot in Bozeman and Livingston this past July and August. The Flathead Valley played host to "Paper Dolls", a thriller that filmed in and around Whitefish in August.

In addition to these two feature films, there have been 26 other projects ranging from national television commercials to documentaries, to an episode of *60 Minutes* featuring Governor Schweitzer. Some of the highlights include a big-budget Lincoln car commercial shot on the Blackfeet Reservation in July; a feature length docu-drama filmed in Helena on the Devil's Brigade and "Boneyards," an A&E network documentary series that shot two episodes on Montana's mining and railroads.

Additionally, there were episodes of *Good Morning America*, the *Early Show*, and *Nightline* as well as other commercials, short films and travel shows. There are at least two more feature film projects seriously eyeing Montana for possible fall and winter shoots and the Film Office continues to attract new interest from Hollywood every day.

Montana Department of Commerce, Promotion Division, Betsy Baumgart, Administrator
406-841-2870 • TDD 406-841-2702 • fax 406-841-2871 • web: visitmt.com
industry intranet: travelmontana.mt.gov

brochures, in hopes of attracting more visitation to the area.

The Carbon County Historical Society will utilize the grant money to further research, survey and document the historic downtown of Red Lodge to improve and update their walking tour brochure. They also plan to enhance their highly successful traveling barn exhibit.

Missoula plans to update their walking tour map and website to feature facts about historic building materials used in the downtown buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Grants from \$3,000–\$15,000 are available on a matching basis with a second round of grants having a November 1st deadline. To obtain an application and program guidelines, please contact Melisa Kaiser Synness at mkaisersynness@mt.gov. To learn how a community can obtain the Preserve America designation, go to: www.preserveamerica.gov.

Chat With A Travel Counselor

Visitmt.com users can now interact in real time with Montana's Travel Counselors via instant messaging technology. This interactive addition to Visitmt.com allows users to receive assistance with planning their Montana vacation and is the last phase of development in the Visitor Information System In the Treasure State (V.I.S.I.T.S.) software upgrade.

A Fond Farewell to Lewis & Clark

Congratulations to the organizers of Montana's swan-song L&C event the "Clark

on the Yellowstone" National Signature Event at Pompeys Pillar. The event played host to nearly 47,000 people in late July during the impeccably executed four-day event. The event attracted many noted historians, avid followers of the trail, as well as visitors interested in Montana's native cultures.

Signatures in the guestbook at the recently completed Pompeys Pillar Interpretive Center indicated visitors from 46 states and the District of Columbia as well as from 15 different countries including New Zealand and Korea.

Montana's Northeastern Plains Birding Trail Online

Travel Montana is pleased to announce a new website geared to the bird watching crowd. NEMontanaBirdingTrail.org, is an online guide promoting Montana's Northeastern Plains Birding Trail and features details about each stop on the trail, as well as travel planning information.

TIIP Grant Update

Competition is Heated for TIIP Grant Funds

Thirty-eight tourism-related building, remodeling or expansion projects submitted applications for the 2006 Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program (TIIP) grant funds. The 2006 TIIP applicants are requesting \$1.7 million in grant funds. The 2006 TIIP grant pool is \$200,000.

Thirteen TIIP applications involve historical interpretation and museum projects while visual and performing arts and cultural facilities are the focus of seven TIIP proposals.

The remaining applications request funds for work on sport facilities, visitor information centers, historic properties, tour trains, public campgrounds, wildlife centers and community activity facilities.

The 2006 TIIP grant funding recommendations will be presented to the Tourism Advisory Council at their October meeting in Glasgow and then to Commerce Director Anthony J. Preite for final approval.

Since its creation in 1995, TIIP has invested over \$2.2 million in tourism "bed tax" funds into 49 projects in 33 Montana communities. The TIIP funds have helped complete almost \$30 million in tourism-related Montana projects.

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Calendar of Events:

September

- 4 MPD Offices closed for Labor Day
- 8-13 Popular Photography Mentor Series Workshop, West Yellowstone, MT
- 12-13 Travel Leadership Summit, Washington D.C.
- 20 Tourism Panel Summit, Helena, MT
- 28-30 33rd Annual Montana History Conference, Billings, MT

October

- 1-3 Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) Meeting, Glasgow, MT
- 9 MPD Office closed for Columbus Day
- 11-13 TIA Marketing Outlook Forum, Boca Raton, FL

*For all of the latest Montana tourism
industry information log on to:
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Travel Montana • Montana Film Office
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301 S. Park
PO Box 200533
Helena, MT 59620-0533

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